

6 February 2019

Dear Convener,

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) is pleased to respond to the Committee's report: 'Young People's Pathways: a progress report on Developing the Young Workforce'. I would also be happy to meet with you to discuss the report and its recommendations further.

**Careers Information, Advice and Guidance: one-to-one advice, online resources and parents and carers**

SDS began delivering our enhanced Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) service offer in schools in August 2016. This approach was designed to:

- Engage and inspire young people at an earlier stage
- Provide a clear focus on the development of career management skills at key transition stages
- Provide face to face, one to one career guidance interventions when making subject choices
- Deliver enhancements to my world of work ensuring better alignment of our digital content with our face to face delivery and structured learner journeys that provide age and stage appropriate resources and tools
- Improve our arrangements for negotiating and delivering services at a school level through our School partnerships agreements

CIAG services are delivered on a needs-based approach which identifies priority groups using a range of factors to determine level of need. Careers advisers use these as a starting point to discuss and agree the level of service required based on the individual. This results in a tailored approach and can include a range of support such as intensive one to one coaching, group activities and / or the use of our digital services, often in a facilitated way, to encourage career exploration and learning.

SDS engage closely with the Scottish Government to review our service offer, and priority groups, ensuring SDS CIAG services are delivering against policy expectations. We will continue to do this, particularly through the refresh of the SG CIAG Strategy during 2019.

SDS consults with young people to evaluate and enhance the support delivered, through an annual Senior Phase Survey which gathers feedback from S4-S6 pupils. This is conducted via online survey and is tailored based on the CIAG services they have received. The survey measures satisfaction with support available and received, likelihood of recommending the service to others and captures views on individual elements including one to one, group sessions and My World of Work (MyWoW). The Survey also queries whether young people received support at the right stage, with the majority reporting the timing as 'about right'. The survey also

captures feedback on why young people may choose not to have a one to one session.

The MyWoW website, and other online resources, such as apprenticeships.scot are intended to complement and enhance face to face support for those receiving it, both group and one to one, and vice versa. Digital career information and advice has an extensive reach to customers across Scotland as a core channel for delivery of universal services and SDS will continue to invest in its continuous improvement to ensure it meets customer need. High quality and regular one to one engagement will continue to be central to the provision of CIAG by SDS in schools and for those in transition from school, and beyond, for those requiring the greatest levels of support.

As the Committee has noted, parents and carers are key influencers and SDS continues to engage with them to review and improve the information and support available to them. The SDS website [www.mykidscareer.com](http://www.mykidscareer.com) provides information on careers and complements the parents and carers section on MyWoW. All parents are also given the option to attend a subject choice one-to-one with a young person in S2 or S3, or at another time, and careers advisers engage with parents and carers throughout the year through planned parental engagement activities agreed as part of every School Partnership Agreement. In addition to this, SDS works with schools, DYW and other partners in the planning and delivery of larger scale parental engagement events and careers fairs.

### **Work placements**

Work experience and placements are provided by local authorities and Education Scotland, however SDS is seeking to ensure that school pupils gain work experience, and by extension develop their work readiness, through participation in Foundation Apprenticeships (FAs).

SDS will continue to support the development of school employer partnerships to ensure young people experience the world of work through their curriculum as part of the Career Education Standard.

### **Key performance indicators – Vocational pathways/Foundation Apprenticeships**

SDS has been delivering on specific ministerial requests each year, made in our annual Letter of Guidance, in regard to Foundation Apprenticeships, our own contribution to the recommendation in respect of vocational pathways. As well as delivering on these requests, we have been working in collaboration with local authorities and other public and private partners to promote and roll out FAs across every local authority and school in the country.

SDS plans to publish our second progress report on FAs shortly, which includes a disaggregation of take-up among local authority area and we are actively working towards ensuring FAs are available in every school in the country.

## **Key performance indicators - Care experienced young people and young people with a disability**

SDS is fully committed to ensuring equality and diversity within Scotland's workforce, supporting industry and employers to ensure equality of opportunity for all within apprenticeships. SDS provides targeted CIAG support for disabled young people, as well as those with care experience, in order to counteract barriers that such young people may experience. Access to additional funding can provide important support to training providers and employers and incentivise them to take action to improve equality outcomes. As such, we worked with Scottish Government to ensure enhanced funding for Modern Apprenticeships (MA) is offered up to the age of 29 for disabled and care-experienced young people.

The percentage of MA starts who self-identify as disabled has improved year-on-year increasing from 3.7% in 2015/16 to 11.3% in 2017/18. This is in line with the target of 12.5% by 2021 identified by Developing Scotland's Young Workforce.

The proportion of MA starts who self-identify as care-experienced has also increased year-on-year, and is approaching a level we believe is more consistent with the care-experienced population in Scotland. The number of care leavers who have successfully taken up an MA has increased from 0.9% in 2015/16 to 1.6% in 2017/18.

SDS also carries out extensive work building the capacity of our colleagues, training providers and employers to engage with under-represented groups.

As a Corporate Parent, promoting the interests of care-experienced young people and supporting them to access and sustain apprenticeship opportunities, this includes enhanced one to one CIAG support for care experienced young people up to 26 years old.

It is important to recognise the impact of our extensive partnership work and collaboration to ensure the breadth of services and support for these individuals is part of a system wide approach to improving outcomes for these customers.

## **The role of employers in delivering Developing the Young Workforce**

SDS is working with Scottish Government officials, who oversee the activity of the 21 Regional DYW Groups, to ensure that Marketplace meets the needs of the Groups and that each of the Groups has a plan to roll-out and utilise. Marketplace is about making appropriate opportunities available to young people, rather than a membership scheme.

SDS work in partnership with a range of national and local employer networks to promote and refine a variety of employer initiatives and services available to the SME community.

We engage regularly with employer networks who represent the interests of SMEs in Scotland to ensure the SME voice is represented where appropriate and has opportunity to influence. This happens both formally via employer network

representation on groups such as SDS's Board, the Scottish Apprenticeship Advisory Board's Employer Engagement Group and via participation in groups and meetings with individual services and products delivered by SDS.

We make full use of national and local employer networks' communication channels available to access an extensive network of SMEs located across Scotland to promote products and services that support SME skills requirements. We also work with individual networks to deliver events for employers to highlight the support available to them. Locally based employer engagement advisers also have well established relationships with employer networks and regularly take skills support referrals.

SDS offer support to all businesses to recruit, manage and develop apprentices. The apprenticeships.scot website allow employers to search for information on the roles they wish to fill and work has taken place to simplify the vacancy upload process. Employer guides on a variety of topics are available from the website, and support is also available via telephone and webchat. SMEs are also supported as employers of apprentices by locally based SDS staff, including Skills Investment Advisers.

Skills for Growth is a free skills diagnostic service, provided jointly by SDS and Re:markable (previously Investors in People Scotland) to businesses with between five and 250 employees. This is our most bespoke product, targeted at companies with growth ambitions and is available to employers across every region and economic sector in Scotland.

SDS's team of regionally based Employer Engagement Advisers Team work to ensure that the employer is aware of, and takes advantage of, all relevant public sector support available. Skills for Growth has supported over 700 SME businesses since 2014 and is targeted with supporting 150 in 2018-19.

Kind Regards,

James Russell  
Director of CIAG Operations  
Skills Development Scotland